



SPECIAL HOLIDAY EDITION

# FrontLine Employee

A newsletter from the Employee Advisory Service (EAS)

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## Special Holiday Stress Edition



**Year-end holidays** - the most peaceful time of year. YEAH, RIGHT! Special meals, decorating, guests arriving, gifts to buy are just one side of the coin. For others, very sad memories and great loneliness is the other side of that same coin.

You don't have to accept a hectic, ho-hum or lonely holiday. There are ways you can insure a better outcome. Hopefully, this **Frontline Employee Special Edition** will provide you with some helpful ideas, activities and even some fun.

You may be a person who needs more help this year. EAS is here for you. Give us a call.



Find your place..



**Holiday traditions** play an important part in many family customs. They are often the things that bind families together. When we find ourselves overwhelmed, we may leave out this important piece. Even when teenagers have gotten too busy, or when kids are grown and gone, it may be the perfect time to rekindle these customs. This may include caroling, or attending a special community event. Religious services or activities may add to your season. List three essential things that will make your season a special experience, and focus your energy on them. Do what you enjoy, and avoid the tyranny of "should."

## Holiday Purchases Can weigh you down



**Simplify your celebration.** Establish realistic time and money budgets and stick to them. Scale your gift-giving so it is in line with your resources, values and beliefs. If you are having a party in your home, accept help or consider hiring help for pre- and post-party clean-up. Don't put unreasonable pressure on yourself to do everything perfectly. If you are feeling overwhelmed, share responsibility for making the holiday season happen. Ask for and allow others to help.

**Setting and sticking** to a budget makes a difference. Make a list and abide by it. The benefit will last long into the new year, when holiday bills are due.

## TAKE CARE OF YOU



**Give yourself the gift** of wellness this holiday season. There are many things you can do. Eat and drink wisely. Take the kids or the dog for a walk. (Don't have a dog? Ask to borrow the neighbor's.) Don't forget to breathe. Exercise and taking deep breaths allow us to exhale the negative feelings inside us. Take time to relax. You may not have a Hot Tub, but most have a *hot* tub. Soak in a hot bath and even add bubbles. Get a massage. (This may be a good gift to ask for, for those who just don't know what to get you!) Spend some time alone. Then extend joy or love to others—and be willing to receive—joy or love. Realize that there will be delays, frustrations and disappointments. Help others. Look for ways to give of yourself, perhaps a charitable program, or by including someone in your celebrations.

# Oh, those Holiday Cards



**S**ending the annual cards to a long list of the people who've sent to us can be a daunting task. We often start by buying cards right after the holidays, then losing them! Once you find your cards, and dig out your list, it's time to see which ones came back last year, or which ones you really want to send. Addressing the envelopes and even writing a "Christmas Letter" to include all take a great deal of time. Consider keeping these SHORT. We do enjoy seeing photos and hearing news, but how do you feel when you open a card and find a 4 page volume. If you must, send the longer letter after the new year. It will be much more warmly received.

**Some tips?** Do it early and be done with it. If you come down to your deadline and haven't done your cards, wait until after the holidays. Don't stay up all night, robbing yourself of much needed rest. Do 2-3 at a time until you're done, then send them all at once. (Avoid "now which one did I send?")

## Better than a can, and not hard to do . . . Cranberry Relish

**Y**ou can make a great impression with this easy recipe.

1 (12 oz) pkg fresh cranberries

1 C water 1 C Sugar

1 large Orange 1 Pkg walnut pieces

With a peeler, cut a long piece of orange rind (zest, not the white part) and bring to a boil in the water and sugar. Then add the berries. They will begin to "pop". Squeeze the juice of the orange into the mix. Stir occasionally, about 10 min. Allow to cool and remove the peel. You can add walnut or pecan pieces, raisins or Craisins, if you like.

Put into a serving dish or bowl and swirl the cooked orange peel into an "orange rose" and top the dish. Easy and delicious. You may never buy canned, again!



## ADD NEW LIFE TO THAT GREEN BEAN CASSEROLE ? ? ? ? ?



**T**hat old stand-by Green Bean Casserole may seem like old hat. Use the age old recipe from cans- a can of green beans (I like to use French-cut style), a can of mushroom soup, and for those who like it, some of those packaged fried onions on top. Now the fun.

Do you like it hot? Add a chopped jalapeno pepper, with the seeds removed, to the mix. How about some extra crunch? Add sliced water chestnuts. Let your imagination rule!

## Some dreams don't Come true. So then what!?



**D**o you long for a relationship with a relative or even a friend that has never existed? Do you have unrealistic expectations that are almost sure to result in hurt feelings, again? "My mom was never close." or "If we could go one year without dad's drinking to spoil the day..." There are ways to immunize ourselves that help!

**1. Take a close look:** What has been the repeated behavior? Has anything happened that might signal a change? Write it down. Putting this on paper might help make it more real, and help in dealing with it in a productive way.

**2. Give yourself permission:** You don't need to subject yourself or your family to abusive situations. Guilt can be a familiar tool, but choose to break the pattern. Leave family home, and make your visit short. Don't accept a dinner invitation you dread. "We are doing dinner at home, this year." is acceptable. It IS!

**3. Forgive:** Ouch! One of the hardest things is forgiveness. When you are doing #1, consider who is being hurt by the behavior. It isn't easy to accept that persons are who they are for reasons we may or may not know. But old habits may not change. If you're hard on yourself for not causing change, forgive yourself. We can only change ourselves, not others.

**4. Call EAS for more help:** Difficult relationships seem to be intensified during the holidays. At this time of year we sometimes feel a duty to make amends, or fulfill obligations with parents or relatives who we know will not or can not reciprocate. If you recognize yourself in this dynamic, you may be able to bring about change for yourself. EAS can help you start.

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